Printing of Retail Price on Packaged Items

959. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether printing of maximum retail price on packaged retail items is not serving the interests of consumers as it exaggerates the product prices;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to do away with this; and

(c) the alternative method under contemplation of Government to safeguard the interests of consumers?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (c) The Packaged Commodities Rules, 1977 requires the manufacturer/packer to declare the sale price of package in the form of Maximum Retail Price (MRP). This is the maximum price at which a package can be sold. The actual selling price could be less than the MRP depending on various factors.

The Ministry is, however, exploring other alternatives for declaring retail sale price on packages with a view to serving the consumers better.

विदेश व्यापार में घाटा

960. **प्रो॰ विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा:** क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) 1994-95, 1995-96 और 1996-97 के वर्षों के प्रथम छः महीनों में भारत के विदेशी व्यापार में कितना-कितना घाटा हुआ है;

(ख) इस अवधि के दौरान भारत द्वारा कितनी-कितनी धनराशि का आयात तथा निर्यात किया गया है; और

(ग) विदेश व्यापार के क्षेत्र में भारत को आत्म निर्भर बनाने हेतु सरकार द्वारा कौन-कौन से कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं?

वाणिज्य मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री बोल्ला बुल्ली रामैया): (क) और (ख) डी. जी.सी.आई. एंड एस. के उपलब्ध आंकड़ों के अनुसार संबंधित अवधि के दौरान भारत का निर्यात, आयात तथा व्यापार घाटा निम्नानुसार रहा:-

(मूल्य: मिलि. अमरीकी डालर)

	अप्रैल-सितम्बर		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
निर्यात	11621	14685	16140
आयात	12851	17065	17953
व्यापार संतुलन	-1230	-2380	-1813

(ग) विदेश व्यापार के क्षेत्र में देश को आत्मनिर्भर बनाने तथा व्यापार घाटे को कम करने में सतत् निर्यात वृद्धि की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है। निर्यात संवर्धन एक सतत् प्रक्रिया है और सरकार द्वारा व्यापार, उद्योग तथा अन्य निर्यात संवर्धनात्मक अभिकरणों के परामर्श से नीतियों तथा क्रियाविधियां को सरल बनाकर द्विपक्षीय व्यापार संबंधों में सुधार करके, निर्यात अवस्थापनाओं संबंधी कठिनाईयों को दूर करके समय-समय पर निर्यातों को बढ़ाने के लिए उपाय किए जाते हैं।

Losses Shown as Profit by STC

961. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation has fudged its accounts to show its loss of Rs. 51.36 crores as profit of Rs. 32.67 crores as reported in the Financial Express dated the 11th October, 1996; and

(b) if so, the action taken against STC management and STC's auditors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) State Trading Corpn. of India has intimated that it finalised its accounts for the financial year 1995-96 on the basis of its will established accounting policies. The accounts were audited by the statutory auditors appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor General and the same were considered and approved by the Board of Directors of STC. These audited accounts of STC reflected a profit of Rs. 32.67 crores. However, C&AG subsequently in its comments observed that the provision should be made for the following amounts:—

(a) Rs. 20.02 crores to be realised on account of canalised import of newsprint in the period prior and upto 1991-92.

(b) Rs. 60.33 crores to be realised on account of import of fatty acids.

(c) Rs. 3.00 crores as investment made in Tea Trading Corporation of India (TTCI), a wholly owned subsidiary of STC.

The Board of Directors of STC considered the comments and keeping in view the facts that the amounts at (a) & (b) above are debts to be realised from the Government and sale of tea gardens is under process in TTCI, the Board decided not to make any provisions for these amounts. The shareholders of STC in the Annual General Meeting also approved the stand taken by STC Board.

Import of Rubber and its Impact on prices in Indian Market

962. SHRI M.A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow import of rubber during the next year;

(b) if so, the details of quantity proposed to be imported;

(c) the quantity of natural rubber imported during this year;

(d) whether Government are aware of the impact of import on the price of rubber in the Indian Market; and

(e) if so, the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise

(c) The Government have not allowed import of rubber duty free during the current financial year, so far. 8990 Tonne of natural rubber have been imported during April to September, 1996 by Rubber Goods Exporters under Advance Licence/Special Import Licence.

(d) and (e) Since import is generally allowed to the minimum extent required to bridge the gap between indigeneous demand and supply, it does not affect the market adversely.

Study on Child Labour in Beedi Industry

963. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been done on the extent of child labour in beedi industry in the country;

(b) if so, the date of such a study;

(c) the recommendations of this study; and

(d) the steps taken to implement recommendations for elimination of child labour in the beedi industry?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) While no specific study has been done recently on the extent of child labour in beedi industry in the country, the Labour Bureau, in a report "The working and living conditions of workers in Beedi Industry in India" has indicated that in beedi industry about 31% of home workers were men, 68% women and 1% were children.

(b) The report was published on 10th October, 1995.

(c) and (d) Though there was no specific recommendation relating to child labour in beedi industry, Government has already taken steps for rehabilitation of child labour working in hazardous occupations including beedi industry. So far 76 child labour projects have been sanctioned to cover about 1.5 lakh children. Under the projects the children withdrawn from work are put special schools where they are provided with non-formal education vocational training, nutrition, health check and stipend.

Poor quality of Wheat and Rice supplied through Fair Price Shops

964. SHRI GYAN RANJAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that wheat and rice supplied through Fair Price Shops are of very poor quality;

(b) whether any surprise checks of the Fair Price Shops are conducted to check the quality; and